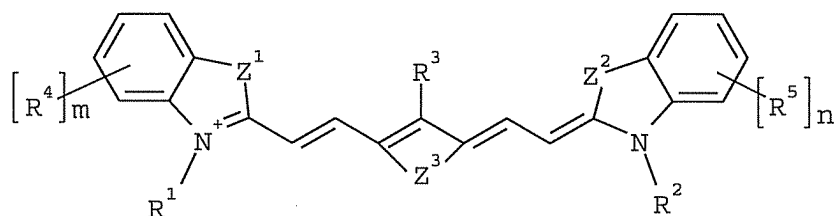


## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A heat-sensitive lithographic printing plate precursor comprising (i) a support having a hydrophilic surface or which is provided with a hydrophilic layer and (ii) a coating provided thereon, the coating comprising (a) an oleophilic layer which comprises a polymer that is soluble in an aqueous alkaline developer and (b) an infrared light absorbing compound according to the following formula:



wherein

- m and n each independently represent an integer from 0 to 4;
- Z<sup>1</sup> and Z<sup>2</sup> each independently represent one or two non-metallic atoms, which may be substituted, necessary to complete a 5- or 6-membered heterocyclic ring;
- Z<sup>3</sup> represents two or three non-metallic atoms, which may be substituted, necessary to complete a 5- or 6-membered heterocyclic or carbocyclic ring;
- each R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>, R<sup>4</sup> and R<sup>5</sup> independently represent an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, aryl or aralkyl group, or a group selected from -G<sup>1</sup>, -L<sup>1</sup>-G<sup>1</sup>, -CN, a halogen, -NO<sub>2</sub>, -OR<sub>a</sub>, -CO-R<sub>a</sub>, -CO-O-R<sub>a</sub>, -O-CO-R<sub>d</sub>, -CO-NR<sub>d</sub>R<sub>e</sub>, -NR<sub>d</sub>R<sub>e</sub>, -NR<sub>d</sub>-CO-R<sub>e</sub>, -NR<sub>d</sub>-CO-O-R<sub>a</sub>, -NR<sub>d</sub>-CO-NR<sub>e</sub>R<sub>f</sub>, -SR<sub>d</sub>, -SO-R<sub>a</sub>, -SO<sub>2</sub>-R<sub>a</sub>, -SO<sub>2</sub>-O-R<sub>a</sub> and -SO<sub>2</sub>-NR<sub>a</sub>R<sub>b</sub>; or wherein two adjacent R<sup>4</sup> and R<sup>5</sup> groups together form an optionally substituted 5- or 6-membered ring which is fused to the ring formed by Z<sup>1</sup> or Z<sup>2</sup>;
- R<sup>3</sup> represents a hydrogen or a halogen atom, -L<sub>2</sub>-G<sup>2</sup>, an alkyl group, an alkenyl group, an aralkyl group, an aryl group, a thioalkyl group or a thioaryl group, each of said groups being optionally substituted;

with

- L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> being a divalent linking group;
- R<sub>a</sub>, R<sub>b</sub> and R<sub>c</sub> being an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, aryl or aralkyl group;

–  $R_d$ ,  $R_e$ , and  $R_f$  being hydrogen or an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, aryl or aralkyl group;

wherein the solubilizing groups  $G^1$  and  $G^2$  are anionic or become anionic in an aqueous alkaline solution having a pH of at least 9 and,

wherein the infrared light absorbing compound comprises total number of three, four or five of the solubilizing groups  $G^1$  and  $G^2$  is equal to three, four or five.

2. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein  $R^3$  comprises at least one of said solubilizing groups.

3. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$ ,  $R^3$ ,  $R^4$  and  $R^5$  each comprise one of said solubilizing groups.

4. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein the IR light absorbing compound comprises three solubilizing groups, of which one is comprised in each of  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$ .

5. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein the IR light absorbing compound comprises three solubilizing groups, of which one is comprised in each of  $R^3$ ,  $R^4$  and  $R^5$ .

6. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein the IR light absorbing compound comprises four solubilizing groups, of which one is comprised in each of  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$ ,  $R^4$  and  $R^5$ .

7. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein  $Z^1$  and  $Z^2$  are  $-\text{C}(\text{CH}_3)_2-$ .

8. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein  $Z^3$  is  $-(\text{CH}_2)_2-$  or  $-(\text{CH}_2)_3-$ .

9. (Original) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein  $R^3$  is  $-\text{Cl}$  or optionally substituted  $-\text{S}-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ .

10. (Currently Amended) A printing plate precursor according to claim 1 wherein the solubilizing group is a carboxy group, a sulfo group, ~~or~~ a hydroxy group, or salts thereof.

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.